

Leash Technique and Your First Adventure Out

We recommend you acclimate your cat to the harness indoors—with lots of praise, petting, and play—before going outside. Practice using a gentle increase of tension to encourage your cat not to strain against the leash. Apply tension if your cat pulls away from you. Release tension when she is calm. Your goal is to walk without tension, using a loose leash. Give rewards of treats, toys or petting when your cat walks calmly or remains at your side. Never jerk or yank on the leash! Simply praise your cat for calm interactions and ignore any unwanted behaviors.

The acclimation process can take anywhere from a few minutes to a few days, or sometimes longer. But before too long, your kitty will almost certainly find that the opportunity for a stroll outside is very rewarding indeed! Bear in mind that for some cats who have rarely been outdoors, the experience can be a bit overwhelming at first. Allow your cat time to move slowly, look around, and feel safe. Rather than drag your cat in a specific direction, allow him the chance to explore at his own pace. In the beginning, brief trips outdoors may be best.



You may want to begin near the door of your house or along a hedge or planted area, rather than in the middle of an open yard. Your cat will likely feel more comfortable and less “exposed” if she feels there is safe shelter near by. If she insists on trying to duck into or under things, gently guide her or pick her up, move her a short distance away. Remember to offer rewards! If your cat is feeling stressed, she’s unlikely to want a treat reward, so use petting, feather toys, a string to chase, etc.

Ready, Set, Go!

Once your cat is comfortable with the harness and leash and you have had successful outdoor time, you may choose to use a long-line (a 10 to 15 foot light, flat leash) to allow your cat a greater range within a safe area. Imagine a lovely picnic on the lawn with your kitty able to explore a wide circle around you!

CAUTION

Please check your surroundings before venturing outside to make sure there are no free-ranging cats or dogs in the area. Beware of the dangers of hot sidewalks or driveways, broken glass, unidentified debris, etc.



For more information on the American Bird Conservancy or their Cats indoors! Campaign, please go to their web site—www.abcbirds.org.

The American Bird Conservancy urges cat owners to keep cats as primarily indoor pets, but to train cats to go outside on a harness and leash on a regular basis.

You may find these figures startling and distressing—the American Bird Conservancy estimates that millions of songbirds are killed each year by free-roaming cats. By choosing a harness and leash rather than allowing your cats to roam free, you can help protect our songbird populations for generations to come. Indoor cats live longer. The average life expectancy of an outdoor cat is just two to five years, while an indoor cat may survive for 17 or more years. Cats who roam outside are constantly in danger from cars, animal attacks, disease, poisons, and human cruelty. Unleashed, free-roaming cats are the single highest cause of cat overpopulation.

Today's cat owners face an important decision: “Should I keep my cat indoors?”



come with me kitty

Harness and Bungee Leash

For the greatest benefit and enjoyment of your Come With Me Kitty Harness and Bungee Leash, we suggest that you read and understand these instructions completely before fitting or using the harness.

We've designed the Come With Me Kitty Harness and Bungee Leash to help enrich your cat's life with the sights, sounds and smells of a safe outdoor experience. It allows you to share enjoyable walks, exercise, and playtime outside your home. More quality time together leads to a deeper, more fulfilling relationship for both you and your cat!



Most feline veterinary practitioners indicate that the average household cat is under-exercised, under-stimulated and overweight. So both veterinarians and behaviorists recommend our indoor cats get more exercise and activity. The Come With Me Kitty Harness and Bungee Leash gives you

gentle control of your cat or kitten, while allowing her to explore the world outside your door. The patented design allows a gentle pressure on the leash to cradle your cat, thus restraining any forward motion without putting pressure on the delicate throat area. The cradling effect is calming to most cats, and provides safe and easy control for you.

The adjustable sternum slide allows you to create a custom fit for your cat's body type, while the dual adjustment points on the girth strap allow a snug, safe fit. The shoulder straps glide through the two D-rings on the back, allowing an increase of tension (when needed) to restrain your cat without choking. The bungee leash provides a little extra “give” to soften the effect of kitty reaching the end of the leash.

Cats have an undeserved reputation for being difficult to train. Two factors play into this:

- 1 Owners with a new puppy can't wait to take him out and introduce him to all the wonders of the world. Because most people assume kittens and cats can't be trained, they make little or no effort to give them the same opportunities.
- 2 Unfortunately, most people are unaware that kittens have an earlier “easy learning window” than puppies, and so miss out on this wonderful growth stage.

The truth is that most cats are not given enough novel experiences and learning opportunities in kittenhood to prepare them to respond happily to new experiences and interactions with humans. This can result in adult cats who are frightened, confused or de-motivated by new things. Unfortunately, those cats often remain housebound.

Kittens learn about social interactions and form opinions about their world very early. Age 3 to 8 weeks is the optimal time for kittens to develop social skills with other cats and people. Gentle handling by a variety of people, including children, brushing and tender examination of body parts are all very beneficial.

From 9 to 16 weeks, your kitten continues to learn how to interact with her world. Social play is very important in this stage. It's also the right time to give your kitten numerous chances to experience safe, new places and fun experiences. These good encounters literally create “learning pathways” in the brain, which ensures that your cat will continue to easily accept new things in the future.

Starting at 6 to 8 weeks, and continuing through 16 weeks of age is the perfect time to introduce your kitten to outdoor fun using the Come With Me Kitty Harness and Bungee Leash. If your cat is in this age range, congratulations!

If your cat is older, don't despair! In fact, many cats don't join their new families until they are well past kittenhood. After 4 months of age, your cat can still learn to truly enjoy new experiences, but the process usually requires a little more patience. It's important that the entire procedure includes happy associations with things that your cat loves or enjoys in order to be most successful. With a little bit of planning, you can introduce your cat to a wonderful variety of safe and pleasant experiences. The Come With Me Kitty Harness and Bungee Leash will make it easy and fun for both of you.

Enriched environments, including play and mental stimulations, are key to a low-stress life. Many feline behaviors about which clients complain are usually associated with lack of mental and physical stimulations, or with fear or anxiety, making them largely preventable. Enriching the cat's environment and providing consistency in their routines prevents many of these problems.

Feline Behavior Guidelines from the American Association of Feline Practitioners



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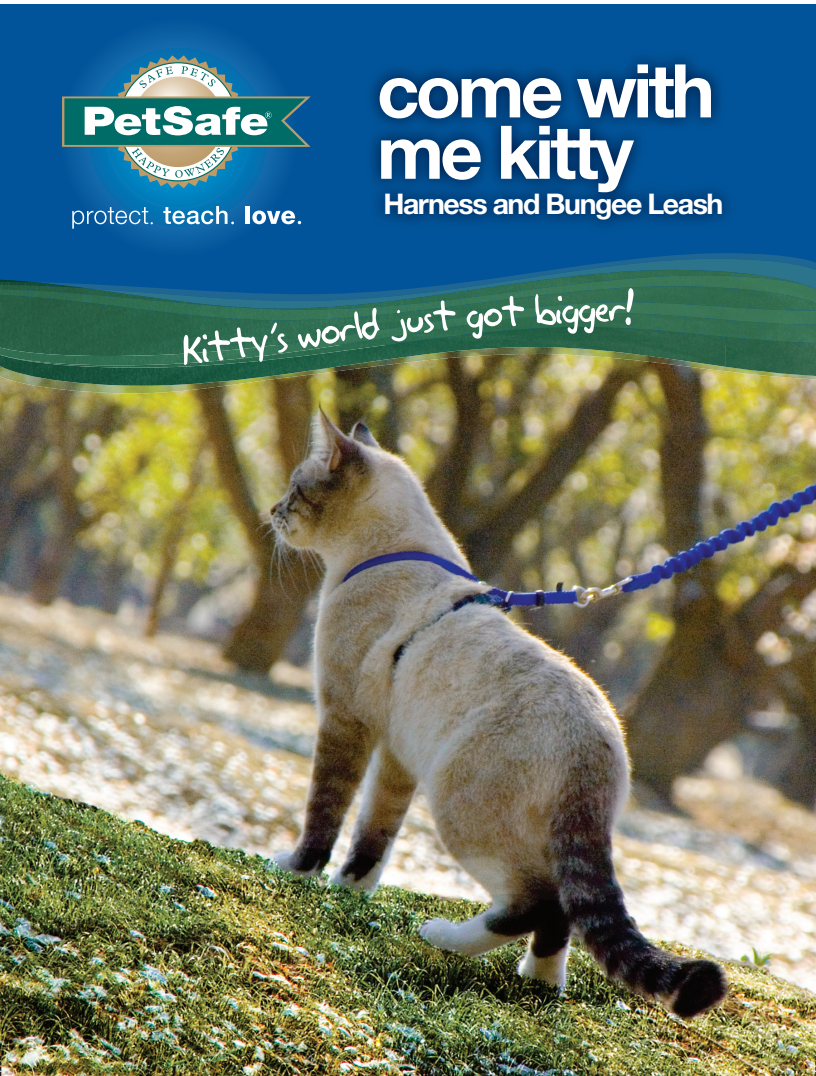


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Encouraging Your Cat with Enjoyable Rewards

Cats of all ages are quicker to respond positively to new things when you make the experience fun and rewarding. Make a mental list of the things your cat likes—treats, mealtime, special toys, long feathers, “fishing pole” type toys, praising voice, petting, scratching an ear or the base of her tail, brushing—whatever motivates her! You’ll use these things right from the beginning in the process of getting your cat used to the harness and exploring the world with you. From your cat’s point of view, he should always associate the Come With Me Kitty Harness with enjoyable rewards.

When planning to use food or treats as a reward, keep in mind that if your cat has free access to unlimited food at all times, you are forfeiting control of one of your strongest motivators. Work with your veterinarian to determine the ideal daily food intake for your cat (both standard food as well as healthy treats). Then consider using a measured portion (or all!) of her normal meal as part of your rewards during training and walking with the harness. Kibble and treats can be fed by hand, or canned foods can be given from a spoon. Couple this with a soft praising voice, and you have a wonderful reward to be associated with the harness and fun exercise.

Before You Begin

This will be a learning process for your cat, as you help her accept the harness and learn to walk with the leash. Kittens will adjust most easily to the sensation of the harness. An older cat may require more time to get used to the feeling of her “new clothes.”

It may be best to divide the fitting and acclimation process into several short sessions to keep the encounter positive. Try to end each session on a pleasant note, and remove the harness when your cat is calm. If you sense your cat’s reaction is on the verge of escalating, don’t prolong the session, as it may make the next one more difficult!

- If your cat is sensitive to handling or becomes anxious when encountering new things, use treats, food, petting, brushing, or a favorite toy to make the fitting experience a pleasant one.
- Choose a quiet time and a quiet room indoors without distractions for either you or your cat.
- Reassure him with a calm voice and gentle petting in areas that he likes.
- Don’t scold or yell, don’t force, and never hit your cat. Your cat must feel safe in the situation or she will be unable to learn from the experience.
- Schedule whatever kitty enjoys—mealtime, playtime, petting and brushing, or catnip feasts—to happen when he is wearing the harness. This helps him associate the harness with good things!

Properly fitted, the harness will be very comfortable and safe for your cat. Remember that any new clothing or equipment—shoes, bras, eyeglasses or contacts, or braces—may feel unusual at first, but we acclimate to them in a short period of time. Don’t let an initial reaction from your cat discourage you. Keep in mind the long-term goal of enriching your cat’s life by giving her broader daily experiences.

Fitting Instructions

The girth consists of one color of nylon, with two quick snap clasps and slide adjustments for a snug fit. The contrasting color comprises the shoulder piece and leash attachment, and feeds through the unique sternum slide hardware.

leash attachment

girth

shoulder straps

figure 1

Open each side strap quick snap and identify parts. Connect bungee leash to leash attachment. **(figure 1)**

- A** Two side straps with Quick-Snap buckles which form the total girth
- B** One adjustment slide on each side strap
- C** Connector “O-Ring” between side straps and chest piece
- D** Special sternum slide adjusts the length of piece between stomach and shoulder area
- E** Two “guide D-rings” at top of harness that allow for gentle control
- F** Black rubber stopper above the guide rings to adjust snugness of chest straps
- G** Leash attachment ring
- H** Bungee leash

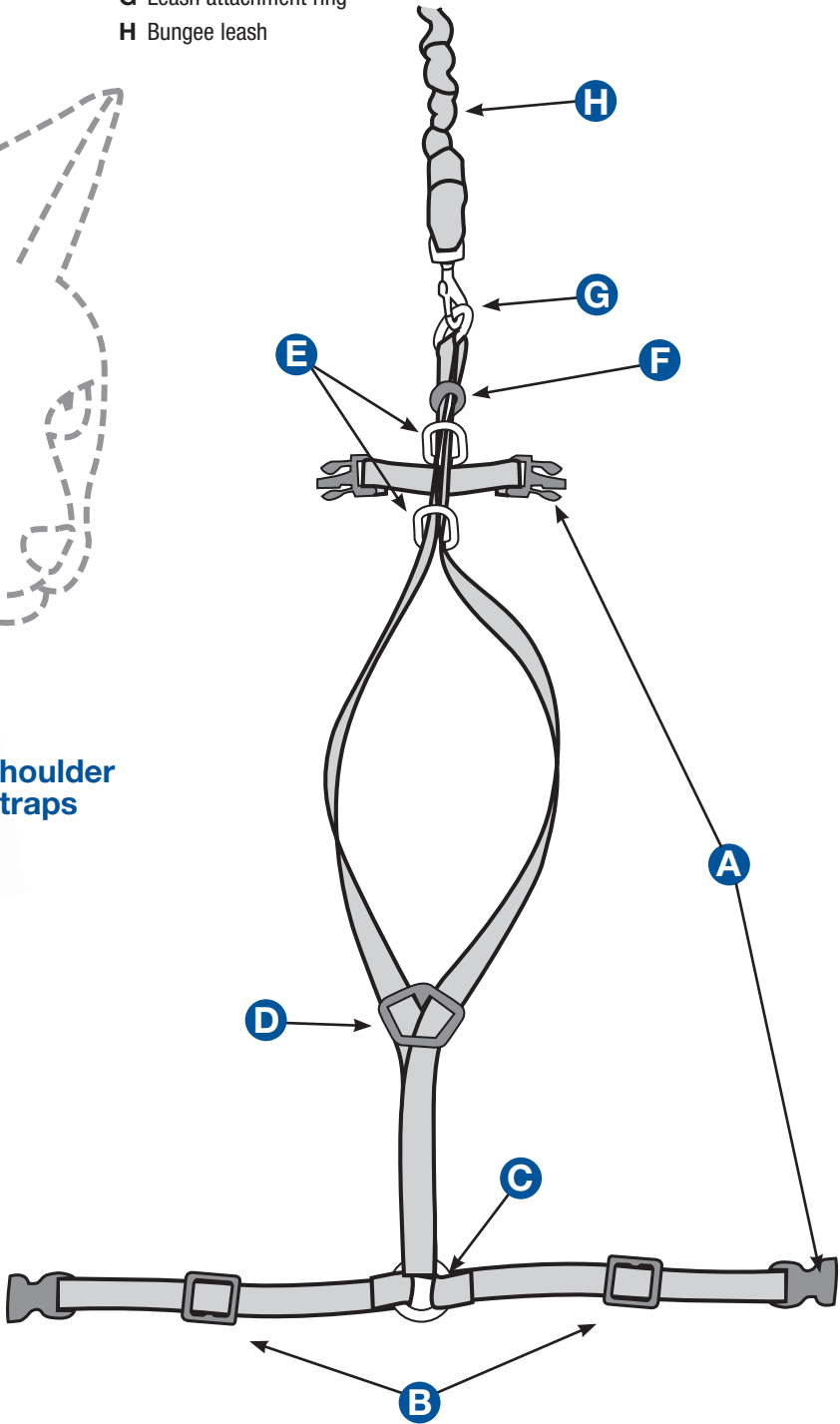


figure 2

Move sternum slide down to make the opening large enough for your cat’s head. Slide shoulder straps on either side of your cat’s head with leash attachment over the withers/back. **(figure 2)**

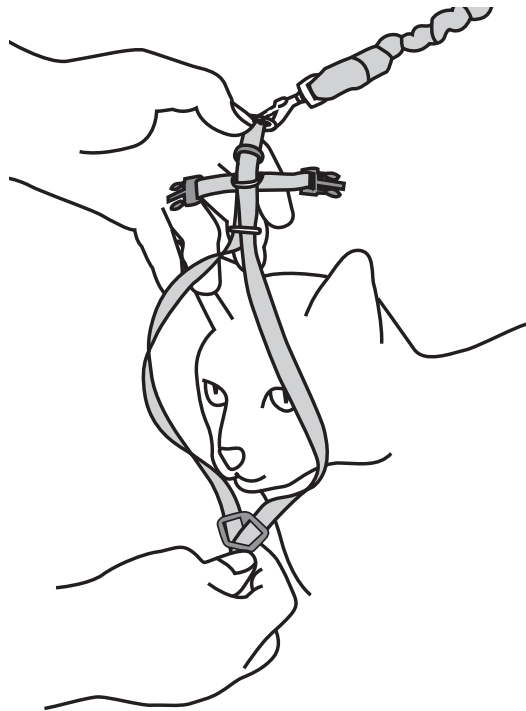


figure 3

Adjust side straps for a snug girth fit. **(figure 3)**

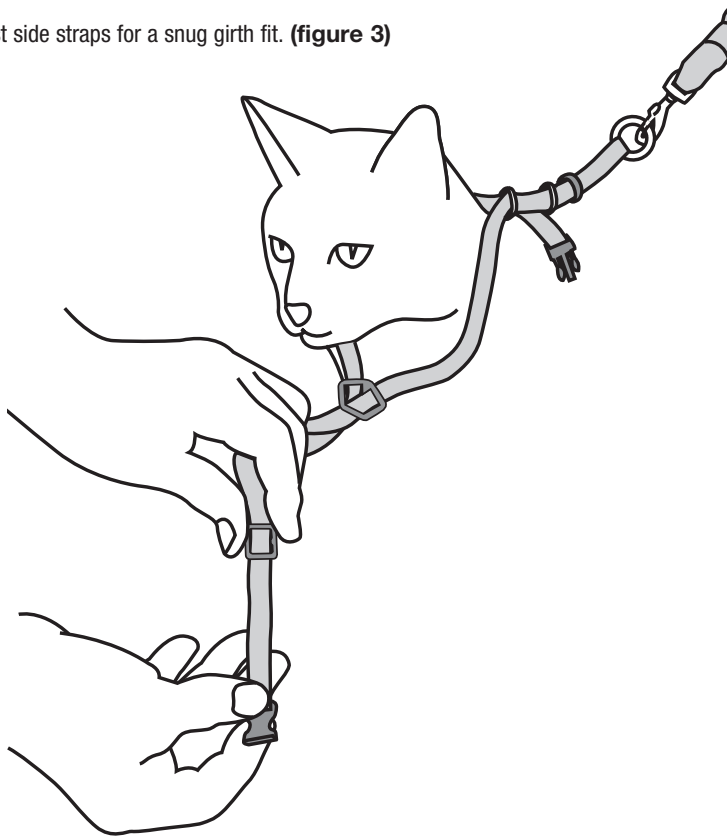


figure 4a

Chest piece goes between legs and side girth straps behind front legs. Snap in place. **(figure 4a)** (Repeat steps 3 and 4 as necessary until fit is snug.)

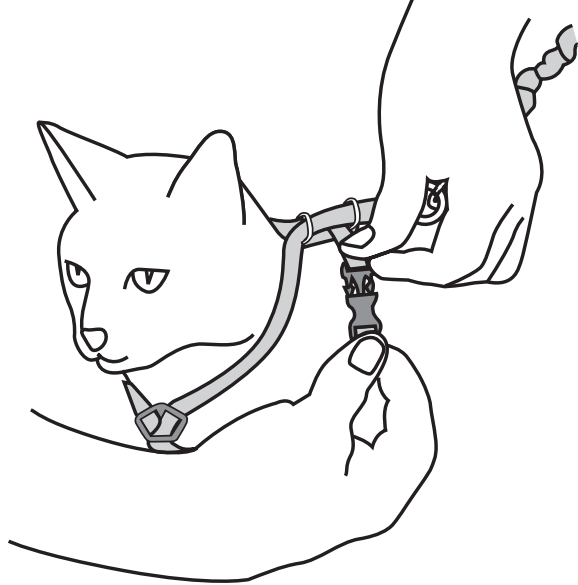


figure 4b

Note that the connector “O” ring should rest on the belly, just behind the cat’s front legs. **(figure 4b)**

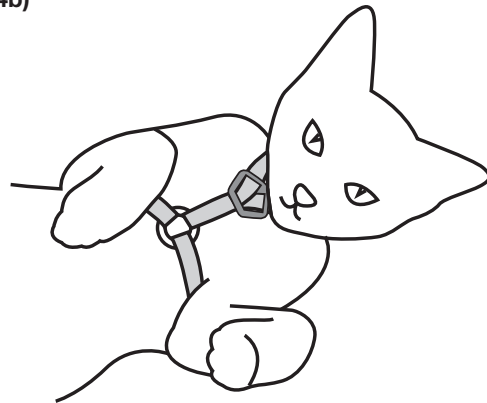


figure 5

You may want to release the girth strap temporarily to make the next adjustment easier. **(figure 5)**

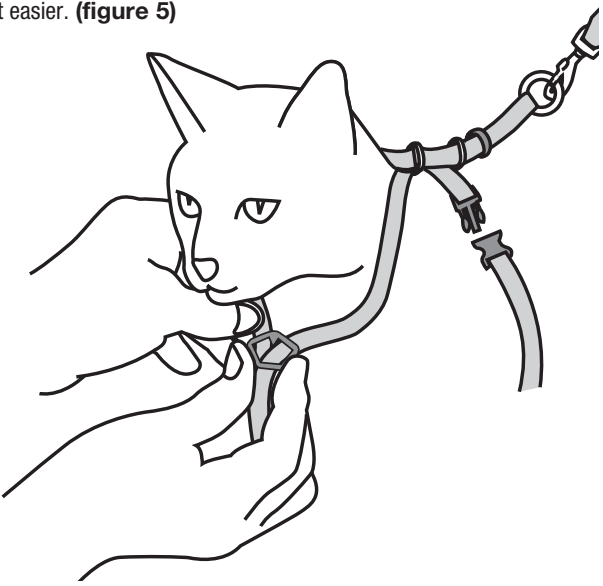


figure 6

Re-snap the side straps into place. Move the sternum slide to sit just below the cat’s breastbone so that it will not ride up to your cat’s throat area. **(figure 6)**

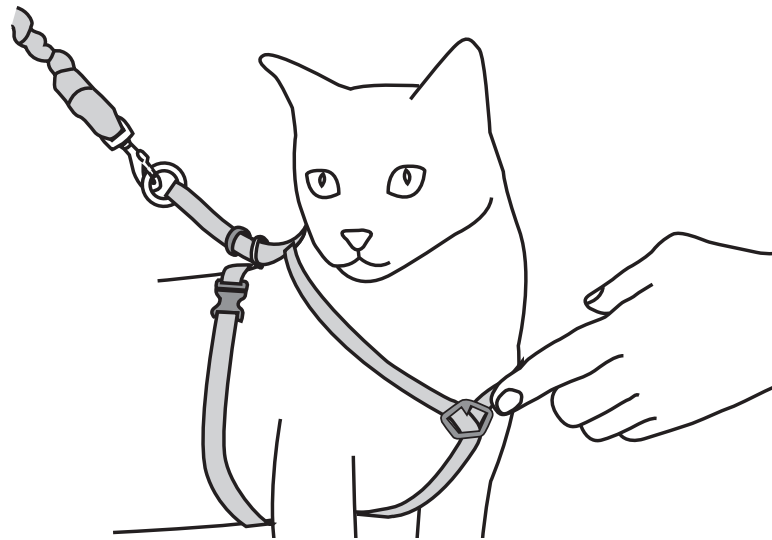
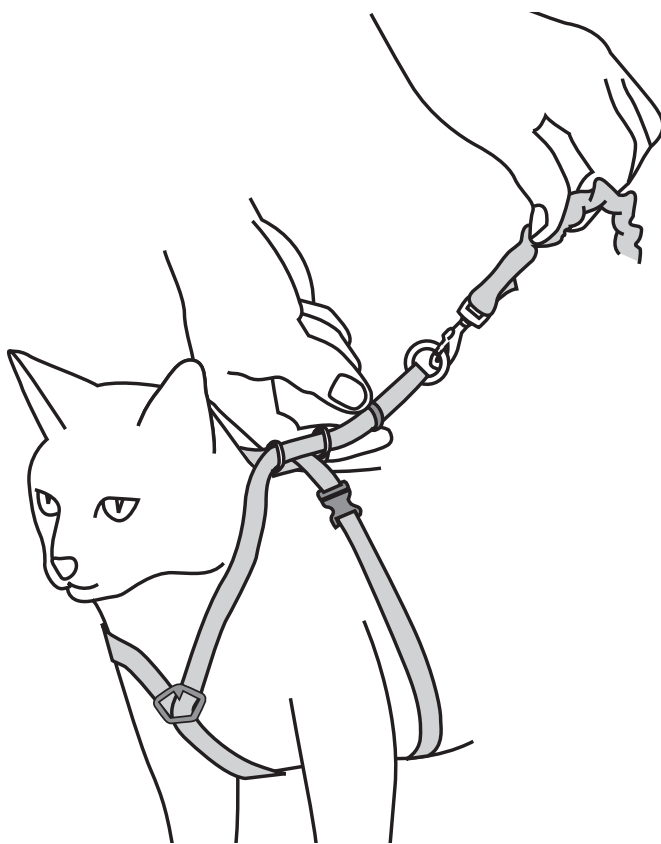


figure 7

Position the black rubber stopper near the leash connector to keep the shoulder straps in place. **(figure 7)** Check to see that tightening the leash does not result in the sternum slide riding up too high, putting pressure on the trachea. If it does, adjust the sternum slide to sit lower on your cat’s chest.



CAUTION

This harness is not intended to be used as a tie-out. Please supervise your cat while he is in the harness.